



**George Washington & Jefferson National Forests**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **US Forest Service To Spray For Gypsy Moths At Recreation Sites In Six Counties**

Roanoke, Va. -- The US Forest Service will spray recreation areas in Hardy, Rockingham, Augusta, Montgomery, Giles and Craig counties to control gypsy moths. Areas that will be sprayed include Hawk Campground on the Lee Ranger District; Todd Lake, Hone Quarry and Confederate Breastworks on the North River Ranger District and Steel Bridge, Cascades and Pandapas Pond on the Eastern Divide Ranger District.

The recreation areas involved will be temporarily closed while the spraying occurs, which will take place one morning between May 1 and May 20. The actual date for the spraying will be based on weather and the development of gypsy moth caterpillars, which vary from year to year.

Most of the areas will be sprayed from a helicopter using Btk, a natural gypsy moth disease bacterium. Steel Bridge will be treated with Gypchek, a gypsy moth specific virus. "We know Btk poses an extremely low risk to humans and animals, even if they touch it, breathe it, or ingest it and Gypchek is even more environmentally sensitive and poses an even lower risk" said project coordinator Russ MacFarlane. "However, to allay concerns and to ensure the public's safety, we feel it is important to avoid exposing people to the spray."

The gypsy moth, a European insect that was imported to the United States in the late 1860's, has a caterpillar life stage that eats the leaves of many vulnerable American tree species, especially oak trees. The stressed trees often die in large numbers, destroying the beauty of an area as well as its commercial timber value and wildlife habitat benefits.

For additional information on the specific recreation areas contact:

Eastern Divide Ranger District	540-552-4641
Lee Ranger District	540-984-4101
North River Ranger District	540-432-0187

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